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IRELAND



Reference Code:	2007/111/1851
Creation Date(s):	10 November 1976
Extent and medium:	11 pages
Creator(s):	Department of Foreign Affairs
Access Conditions:	Open
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CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND

580 FIFTH AVENUE

NEW YORK, N. Y. 10036

December 10, 1976

The Secretary
Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin

Attention : Anglo-Irish Section

CONFIDENTIAL

Visit of the Deputy Leader of the SDLP

1. During the course of his stay in the United States on a two-month fellowship at Harvard University, the Deputy Leader of the SDLP, Mr. John Hume, visited the New York area on three occasions. On each occasion, Mr. Hume informed the Consulate in advance of his visit and in fact on his last two visits (when he was accompanied by his wife) he stayed at the home of the Deputy Consul General. At the beginning of his visit, Mr. Hume had indicated that he did not wish to get involved in meetings or media exposure that might involve him in controversy with Irish-Americans in regard to the IRA. However, as he became familiar with the situation, he indicated that he would be interested in some contact and media exposure and, as will be seen from the report under, he did in fact do so.
2. Mr. Hume's first visit to New York was on the afternoon of Friday, October 15 where he attended a dinner in his honour given by Mrs. Ethel Kennedy. He also attended a reception given by the Deputy Consul General for Father Austin Eustace of the Tyrone Development Association (see our report of December 1 - reference POL.14/3/12/11). On Saturday, October 16, Mr. Hume left for Washington.

3. Mr. Hume again visited New York on Friday, November 19 and attended a luncheon arranged by the Press & Information Officer with senior representatives of the media. Included among the guests were Mr. Graham Hovey of the Editorial Board of the New York Times; Mr. James Chase, Managing Editor of Foreign Affairs Magazine; Mr. Rick Ballard, Senior Writer, NBCTV's Today Show; Mr. Edwin McDowell, Editorial Writer of the Wall Street Journal; Mr. Bill Sunderland, Former Editor of the New York Daily News; Mr. Richard Neuhaus, Senior Editor of Worldview Magazine; and Mr. John Thornton, Editor of the Irish Echo. Mr. Hume spoke briefly on the Northern Ireland situation as he saw it and a question and answer session followed. In his presentation, Mr. Hume emphasized what he regarded as a fundamental problem in Northern Ireland, namely the fact that there were a million Protestants in the area who felt that they had traditional ties to Britain and were not willing to consider the possibility of a united Ireland at this stage. Mr. Hovey asked several questions in regard to the current situation in Northern Ireland and also asked specifically how he and his party felt about the Irish Government's policy in regard to Northern Ireland. Mr. Hume replied that the line being followed by the Government, namely that of promoting reconciliation between the two communities in Northern Ireland, was the correct one in the present situation. Mr. Neuhaus, Senior Editor of Worldview Magazine, stayed on for some considerable time after the luncheon proper had ended and had a long discussion with Mr. Hume on the SDLP's position in Northern Ireland and particularly in regard to the call for British withdrawal by some members of the Loyalist community. Mr. Hume took the line that British withdrawal prior to the working out of mutually agreed structures of Government between the two communities in Northern Ireland would be a very dangerous thing and would leave the minority community without guarantees or indeed protection from attack. Mr. Hume told Consular officers that he had been asked during his visit to contribute an article to the New York Times Magazine on Northern

Ireland for which they would pay a fee of \$1,000 - apparently Mr. Hovey mentioned the matter to him during the course of the luncheon. Later on Friday afternoon, Mr. Hume met with Mr. Sean Cronin of the Irish Times and was accompanied by Mrs. Hume, the Press & Information Officer, Mr. Smith, and the Deputy Consul General, Mr. O Coileain. The meeting had been arranged by Mr. Smith at Mr. Hume's request. Mr. Cronin wrote about the meeting in his column in the Irish Times on November 29 (copy attached). Mr. Hume had not expected that Mr. Cronin would write about the meeting in such detail and, in fact, on one occasion when he was questioned in some detail by Mr. Cronin about the resolutions for the then forthcoming SDLP conference, he had told Mr. Cronin that he did not wish to be interviewed formally. However, in retrospect, Mr. Hume was happy with the interview as written by Mr. Cronin and was, in fact, indifferent to what would appear to be the snide mention by Mr. Cronin of the presence of two Irish Consulate officials.

4. On Saturday, November 20, Mr. Hume attended a luncheon given by Mr. Thomas Gallagher, President of Doyle, Dane & Bernbach advertising agency - Mr. Gallagher is a friend of Mr. Tony O'Reilly and an active member of the Ireland Fund.

On Saturday evening, Mr. Hume attended the Annual Dinner of the American Irish Historical Society as a guest of the President, Dr. Kevin Cahill. He would have liked to have had the opportunity to address the audience which was over 1,000 but Dr. Cahill was adamant that only the outgoing and incoming medalists, Governor Hugh Carey of New York and Mr. George Meaney of the AFLCIO, should speak. The dinner was attended by several political, business, and Irish-American leaders from New York and Mr. Hume had an opportunity of meeting many of them. He had a long conversation with Governor Carey who holds him in high regard and

attended a reception for a select number of VIP's following the dinner given by Governor Carey.

5. On the evening of November 21, Mr. Hume attended a reception given by the undersigned. The reception was attended by the leaders of the major Irish-American organizations in the New York area (see list attached). Mr. Hume spoke at the outset for about 15 minutes on what he termed the reality of the situation in Northern Ireland. He said that it was necessary for each of the traditions in Northern Ireland to re-examine the basis of their respective positions in order to break away from the shackles of the past and create a unity of people. Each community in Northern Ireland had to realize that there could be no victory of one side over the other. He said that this fact was now widely accepted. He stated that when the two communities in Northern Ireland succeeded in setting up mutually accepted institutions of Government in which each community would have a share, co-operation between North and South would follow naturally particularly in such areas as energy and tourism. Mr. Hume said that what he and his party were endeavouring to do, in consort with responsible leaders of the Loyalist community, was to forge, out of the present situation of prejudice and fear, a new Ireland that would be based on respect by each community for the traditions of the other and on the understanding and acceptance by each community that the other had a right to exist and to pursue a normal pattern of life. He said that his party's policy was not emotionally attractive and consequently would be a slow process requiring hard work and tolerance. Mr. Hume's presentation was followed by a question and answer session which concentrated in large part on the history of the SDLP, the extent of its support in the minority community and the effects of violence on the every-day life of the community in Northern Ireland.

He continued to talk to the various Irish-American leaders privately during the evening and he expressed himself as very satisfied with the contacts he had made and he hoped that he would have an opportunity to follow them up. He asked various Irish-American leaders present to contact him personally and said that if he was not in a position to reply himself, the Consulate General would be happy to do so. Mr. Hume told Consular officers afterwards that he was of the opinion following his visit to various parts of the United States that New York was the major nerve-centre of Irish-American activity and that he would be anxious to make contact with the Irish-American community here at a future date. He felt also that there might be some possible support for the SDLP in the area particularly with regard to finance. It is noteworthy that Mr. Michael Delahunty, former National President of the AOH and former National Coordinator of the Freedom for All Ireland Committee, did not attend the reception. As the Department will be aware, Mr. Delahunty was mainly responsible for the decision by the AOH to set up the Northern Ireland Resurgence Trust Fund of which Mr. Hume was Chairman. Mr. Hume, however, met Mr. Delahunty briefly the previous evening following the Irish-American Historical Society dinner. Mr. Hume felt, as did Consular officers present, that Mr. Delahunty was distant and appeared as if he did not wish to get involved in any way (See our report INF.10/8 of December 10, 1976).

6. On Monday, November 22, Mr. Hume had scheduled a lecture at Fordham University and a dinner in his honour by Mr. John A. Mulcahy. Mr. Hume spoke to an audience of faculty and students at the Bronx campus of Fordham University. He gave a brief presentation on Northern Ireland beginning with some stark statistics on violence in Northern Ireland; the genesis and nature of the Northern Ireland situation; discrimination practices under the British regime; and the reasons for such discrimination as perceived by the Protestant community; the evolution of the Civil Rights Movement and the gains achieved as a result of that Movement's constitutional approach. Mr.

Hume outlined broadly the SDLP's policy of talking to responsible leaders of the Loyalist community and the aim of negotiating cooperation between the two communities in Northern Ireland. Mr. Hume developed these points in response to questions - in particular, he stated that the British presence was a secondary consideration in the Northern Ireland situation compared to the community division; he rejected an independent Ulster on the basis that it presupposed that the British presence was the cause of the violence and that an independent Ulster would offer no guarantees to the minority. He said that there was a necessity for a clear statement by the British Government to the Unionists that there would be no return to the old Stormont and that some form of power-sharing was an essential prerequisite for the resumption of self-Government in Northern Ireland. When asked what the reaction of the Republic would be to a doomsday situation, he said that popular emotion, presently eclipsed by nausea in the Republic resulting from the violence, would rise so strongly to the surface as to leave any Government in the Republic with no option but to intervene. Following this question and answer session, Mr. Hume attended a luncheon hosted by the President of Fordham, Father James Finlay, SJ (the names of the guests are attached). In reply to questions by Father David Bowman, Director of the Ireland Program of the National Council of Churches, Mr. Hume stated that the Peace Movement, while indicating a popular revulsion for violence, was open to criticism for rejecting politicians who, after all, were the people who would have to negotiate and produce an agreed solution. When pressed by Father Bowman, he said that hopefully the Movement would create structures which politicians could avail of at further negotiations. He felt that those who were influential

with the Peace Movement should endeavour to help them to recognize this reality. In reply to a further question by Father Bowman as to the evidence for statements that the Irish Northern Aid Committee is financing arms for the IRA, Mr. Hume quoted a statement by Mr. Matthew Higgins to the effect that he would not mind if the money was used for the purchase of arms.

On Monday afternoon, Mr. Hume attended the downtown campus of Fordham University. This lecture was unfortunately rather poorly attended mostly because it took place during class hours and also because the downtown campus of Fordham has less of a student body than the campus in the Bronx. The students who attended this lecture were not Irish-American and seemed to be mostly involved in the political science faculty.

On Monday evening, Mr. Hume attended a dinner hosted by Mr. John Mulcahy at the Brooks Club, a private mens club in Manhattan (a list of the guests attending is attached). Mr. Hume was somewhat disappointed at the level of non-comprehension from what could be termed some of the major business leaders in the United States. He felt that in an effort to explain the situation, he had perhaps over-simplified the situation and in subsequent conversations with the Deputy Consul General and myself, he wondered if he had not antagonized his audience. I replied that I felt that, even though there was little meeting of minds at a level of logic, he had made a good impression and had impressed them personally. Later that evening, Mr. Hume, together with his wife, had supper with Mr. Steven Smith and his wife, Jean - formerly Jean Kennedy. Mrs. Smith, who thinks highly of Mr. Hume and who has visited Northern Ireland, indicated that she would be interested in making a film on American artists resident in Ireland and asked Mr. Hume if he could be of assistance. Mr. Hume mentioned the matter to the Deputy Consul General and myself

and we undertook to find out such basic information as we could - Mr. Hume was anxious to keep the matter private and low-key at this stage. Consequently, we requested information on the matter from the Department who contacted the Revenue Commissioners for the names and addresses of American artists. As will be seen from the enclosed copy of a telex received from the Department in reply, the Revenue Commissioners stated that they were precluded from supplying the information under the Official Secrets Act, 1962.

7. On his last day in the United States, Wednesday, December 1st, Mr. Hume was a guest on the Today Show and was interviewed by the compere, Mr. Tom Brokaw, who had met him at the dinner given by Mrs. Ethel Kennedy (see above). The interview lasted for about 12 minutes and Mr. Hume was introduced as the leading spokesman for non-violence in Northern Ireland. Mr. Hume began by saying that, because of the violence in Northern Ireland and the understandable news value this had for the media, Americans did not often have the opportunity of getting an in-depth analysis of the situation there. The publicity given to the Peace Movement in recent times had led to a greater awareness on the part of Americans of the complexities of the situation and to a lessening of the publicity given to the violent organizations who did not represent the majority on either side. Those Americans who were asked to contribute toward such organizations should be aware that these organizations were working against the interests of their own communities. Mr. Hume said that he detected a deep concern among Irish-Americans and that, while some support existed for organizations engaged in violence, such support was now coming from a minority. In reply to a question by Mr. Brokaw as to whether the Peace Movement was enough in itself to bring about a solution or whether more was required, Mr. Hume agreed that there had to be more, but that he hoped the Peace Movement

would create a climate in which politicians, with a mandate from the people, could create the institutions of Government which would permit of partnership between the two communities. He said that such a partnership had been attempted in 1974 and had worked for a period for the first time ever in Northern Ireland. This partnership had led to a greater understanding and had the support of a substantial number of people. Mr. Hume said that there were two versions of history in Northern Ireland, one Protestant and one Catholic, and that what was needed in Northern Ireland was a recognition that diversity was a good thing. He said that America provided an outstanding example of how to harness diversity to the advantage of the community at large. When Mr. Brokaw asked about the British presence, Mr. Hume replied that it was an over-simplistic view of the situation to state that the problem in Northern Ireland resulted from the British presence - the major difficulty being one between the two communities that existed in Northern Ireland. He said that if the basic difficulties between the two communities could be solved, the British presence would be an easy matter to deal with. Mr. Hume expressed himself as pleased with the interview but wondered aloud if he should not have come out stronger against the lack of a clear indication from the British as to what they proposed in Northern Ireland. He said to Consular officers that, though he was anxious to make it clear to Americans generally and to Irish-Americans particularly that the majority of people in Northern Ireland were opposed to violence and to the Provisional IRA - in particular he was anxious at the same time not to antagonize people who might be inclined to be well-disposed as he felt that to do so would be counter-productive.

Mr. Hume had lunch with Mr. Cy O'Neill, an investment banker in New York whom he had met previously through Mr. Tony O'Reilly, President of Heinz. Mr. O'Neill had expressed an interest in helping Mr. Hume and in introducing him to influential personalities in the New York area. Mr. Hume informed the Deputy Consul General that during this visit, he had been impressed by the amount of wealth particularly in the New York area, and in the possible opportunities this presented for fund-raising. He said that, while he had previously been doubtful about fund-raising for the SDLP in the United States, the amount of money available here and the need which the SDLP had for funds, tended toward convincing him that perhaps the party should consider that possibility. He felt that Mr. O'Neill could be helpful in this regard and seemed to consider it desirable and feasible. No officer of the Consulate attended the lunch in question for obvious reasons and Mr. Hume did not say if Mr. O'Neill had been receptive or otherwise on the question of fund-raising. Mr. Hume did, however, during the course of his visit, ask an Irish-American lawyer, Mr. Joe Fallon, a friend of the Consulate who is well-disposed toward the Government and the SDLP, to look into the legal ramifications of fund-raising for a foreign political party. Mr. Fallon is a former National President of the Young Democrats and was Commissioner for Urban Affairs in the administration of Mayor Lindsay.

8. Mr. Hume also had extended meetings with Mr. Tony O'Reilly with whom he was a guest over Thanksgiving and with Mr. Tim Rooney, an Irish-American who is active in the Ireland Fund. He also met with Mr. Jimmy Breslin, the journalist and author, at the American Irish Historical Dinner but no formal arrangements for an interview resulted. Mr. Hume told consular officers that, while Breslin had not been well-disposed to him some years ago, he (Hume) had heard through a third party that Mr. Breslin had recently stated that

the SDLP was the only sensible group for the minority to support in Northern Ireland and that he personally thought that Mr. Hume's analysis of the Northern Ireland situation was the only one that offered any hope for the future. He had also apparently indicated some interest in interviewing Mr. Hume. That did not, however, materialize.

9. Conclusion :

During his visits to New York, Mr. Hume met and impressed most of the prominent personalities concerned with Irish affairs. He was remarkably successful in convincing those he met of the complexity of the Northern Ireland situation and of the necessity of finding a solution that acknowledges the existence of a million Protestants in Northern Ireland - it is particularly difficult to get this reality across to Irish-Americans and Mr. Hume's ability to do so will be enormously helpful to us in explaining the realities of the situation in Northern Ireland. Mr. Hume also pointed out on several occasions the helpfulness of the Irish Government's present policy and he continuously emphasized in public the good relations which existed between the Government and the SDLP. This, taken in conjunction with the personal respect which Mr. Hume enjoys among many Irish-Americans, will be helpful in getting across Government policy on Northern Ireland.

G. H. H.
Consul General

POC/nps
Encls :

c.c. Mr. Michael Lillis - Washington